

# Cross Connections



**Justice Sector Constellation Project Report:**  
*Recommendations for improving referrals of low-income  
clients to Justice Sector services providers.*

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## **1. Executive Summary**

The Cross-Referral Project (“project”) was a student-led research project done in collaboration with the Justice Sector Constellation (“Constellation”) of the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative (“CPRI”) and the University of Calgary, Development Studies 591 class. The project focused on the referral system experienced by clients at the intersection where poverty reduction intersects the legal system. The project’s main goal was to propose recommendations that could be implemented by the Constellation to enable more timely and appropriate referrals of low-income clients to justice sector service providers. The project team also attempted to examine gaps where the process could be improved and analyzed a survey report by the Constellation for significant patterns in the referral process. The work done by the project team would also potentially help to inform areas of training the Constellation could incorporate. The following were deliverables of the project to inform its recommendations:

- Analysis of survey results of justice sector service providers conducted by the Constellation;
- Interview service providers;
- Review referral forms;
- Conduct environmental scan (literature review);
- Present findings and recommendations to Constellation meeting.

Increasing evidence indicate that not only is it very difficult for low-income clients and marginalised individuals to navigate the legal system but they are the most vulnerable populations in the community, especially women and children, who most commonly use legal services. Low income clients and marginalised individuals accessing legal services often require more than just legal support, they also need access to other necessary health and social service resources. The Constellation recognized that it is not just vulnerable populations in our community that lack knowledge of resources, but also employees and intermediaries who are often unaware of the services available to the public.

### **Scope of work**

Three main phases of the project guided the team’s work, these phases were:

Phase 1: **Survey Analysis** - Analyzing the survey results conducted by the Constellation with six (6) justice sector organizations who reported receiving a total of 79 unique referrals. The breakdown of referrals received by organization is as follows:

1. Centre for Public Legal Education of Alberta (31 referrals)
2. Calgary Legal Guidance (20 referrals)
3. Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary (20 referrals)
4. Calgary John Howard Society (3 referrals)
5. Pro Bono Law Alberta (3 referrals)
6. Other (2 referrals)

\*Total = 79

Guided by questions provided by the Constellation the objective of analyzing the survey results was to help identify the sectors in which and the extent to which referrals from health care and other social service providers and intermediaries to justice sector service providers occur regularly, and those in which such referrals do not occur regularly. The project team also analyzed the survey results for noticeable patterns or gaps in the referral process reported.

Phase 2: **Interviews with justice sector staff** – A semi-structured questionnaire was developed by the project team for interviews with available justice sector staff. The questionnaire focused on *i)* understanding the referral process and protocol for clients accessing legal services; *ii)* how staff felt about the effectiveness and timeliness of referrals and if this can be improved between sectors (for e.g. between health and social services to the justice sector); and *iii)* any other insights (successes and challenges) about the referral process for clients accessing legal services.

Staff from nine (9) different justice sector organizations responded to our request for interviews, 7 of the 9 interviews were completed in person, and 2 were completed over email (completion of questionnaire). At least two project team members were present at each in person interview and were guided by a semi-structured interview guide however most of the interviews were conversational and free flowing. The project team transcribed the interviews for each conversation and analyzed them for patterns, gaps, client experiences and insights into the referral process of legal services.

Phase 3: *Literature review* – scholarly articles and program reports were accessed online using word and phrase searches and various combinations such as ‘access to justice’, ‘low income + legal services’, ‘marginalized populations’, ‘Canadian legal system’, ‘referrals + legal system’, etc. using the Google search engine.

## **Summary of Findings**

The seven (7) summary findings were informed by the analysis of the survey results, a literature review and by interviews conducted with staff from justice sector organizations.

**1. *Social environment in which people receive services matter*** - The social environment in which people receive assistance from service providers makes a difference in the outcome of their situation. People would first seek help from a place/source where they feel unthreatened or welcomed, and thus people feeling “safe” was considered important. Referrals become ineffective if people feel like they are not being listened to by service providers, and are just being handed off to another organization. Frustration will increase when clients have to continually repeat their stories to different agencies, and will feel that they are being bounced around a complex system instead of receiving the assistance they need. From the survey analysis, 1 in 5 clients (20%) needs are not met by the legal system on the first referral. For over half of these clients (9 of 16) it is unclear if they received an appropriate second referral, got lost or simply “checkout” from the system entirely.

**2. *Lack of public awareness and among service providers of legal services offered by the justice sector*** - There is a gap in the public awareness of services offered by the legal and justice sector. Some service providers are themselves unaware or unfamiliar with the services and resources provided by others in the legal and justice sector. “Awareness” was one of the key terms used in the interview analysis and literature review, suggesting more can be done to increase knowledge of what services are being offered in justice sector in Calgary. Better communication both among justice sector staff and across sectors (e.g. Health, Basic-needs, etc.) we feel can lead to referrals that are more appropriate and not based on assumptions about what services other organizations offer. The sector needs to invest in strengthening relationships among staff of different agencies for broader and wider collaboration. When staff contacted the organization a client was being referred to, in addition to advocating for a client, referrals had a

greater success rate for clients. A central database that is regularly maintained is lacking whose use should be part of the training of staff making and receiving referrals. There is a lack of ongoing training for frontline staff specific to challenges and best practices of client referrals.

**3. Addressing issues not in isolation nor localized** - Services are often not prepared to address the intersectionalities of legal issues and of people's lives. For example, a legal matter often could have both a family and criminal aspect and span several jurisdictions (involving others in Calgary and Edmonton for e.g.). Beyond legal needs a person may have basic needs that need to be addressed first. A term that was used multiple times in the interview transcripts was "entry point". A lack of an easy entry point into the justice sector for those who cannot afford a lawyer puts those who are marginalized or low-income at a disadvantage. In the absence of a lawyer, the various service providers can only provide one piece of the puzzle, and the client is left to fit the necessary pieces together. This is often stressful and ineffective for someone unfamiliar with the legal system, as many people, especially those experiencing poverty, lack an education of the legal system. Legal issues for some people are not conveniently packaged by jurisdiction or legal domains for legal services to address. If there were a more integrated and collaborative justice sector, across the city of Calgary or better yet the province of Alberta, the appropriate referral of clients could be improved.

**4. There is a tension between having a "one-size fits all" model while still addressing the diverse needs of a wide range of clients** - Having a standardized or universal protocol that is compatible with all agencies providing legal services to clients is difficult to construct. One of the challenges is that in a complex system, there is a need to move away from simplistic dichotomies such as deciding whether to create a universal protocol, or address needs individually to acknowledge their diversity. There is a tension created with a "one-size fits all" model that does not allow much room for the wide range of clients with various and unique needs. However, the lack of consistency and uniformity throughout the justice system makes the referral process confusing and inefficient as clients are referred from one service to the next. There are multiple identities that an individual may identify with and certain groups may face interacting layers of discrimination which makes it challenging to assess the situation and successfully help someone in a legal system that addresses the population as a homogenous

whole. Both elements need to be woven together for a better referral system, that of compatible referral methods across services and more access to legal specialists so no client is turned away.

**5. System is not adaptable to a growing diverse population, and is difficult to change from the service provider level** - The system is not adaptable to a diverse and growing population in Calgary. The complexity of the system poses a barrier for those that are a part of a more marginalized group, and their needs are often not addressed. This leads to the further exacerbation of legal issues for these more vulnerable clients. As discussed in our literature review, the legal system is less likely to be accommodating towards groups such as immigrants, refugees or newcomers, young offenders and women. This is especially apparent in the failure of the legal system to provide effective justice for Indigenous peoples within Canada.

**6. Challenges in clients accessing information for self and online referrals** - Although self-referrals and online referrals are increasing, there is a lack of website revision that is needed in order for people to effectively be able to self-refer themselves. In the survey conducted by the Justice Constellation, self-referrals made up 30% of overall referrals, but there was little information and data collected from individuals who self-refer to legal services and resources. From the survey results, the Justice Sector knows the least about this groups of referrals in spite of the fact that it appears to be a quickly growing category of referrals.

**7. Not enough is understood about the referrals steps that ultimately lead to matched client needs of legal and justice services** - From the analysis of the survey results conducted by the Constellation the project team felt that there needs to be more research to better understand the relationship between correctly identifying legal issues of clients, appropriate referrals and matched client needs by justice sector providers to which clients are referred. For example, from the survey analysis there is no 100% guarantee that appropriate referrals by organizations were dependent on identifying or correctly identifying legal issues nor did all appropriate referrals lead to matched client needs.

## **Recommendations**

**Umbrella** - Based on our research, the project team proposed recommendations to enable more timely and appropriate referrals of low-income clients to justice sector service providers. These are broken down into umbrella, and specific recommendations. From our findings, the following are the guiding broader issues that inform our specific recommendations.

1. ***Focus on increasing public awareness and access to services in the justice sector.*** Lack of access to information is one of the greatest challenges for low-income clients who are already facing poverty and varying structural barriers.
2. ***Improve client intake and ensure that time is taken for the needs of the client to be understood and met.*** Without carefully diagnosing the root issue by spending time asking the right questions, the client ends up frustrated and without their needs met. In the referral process they could get lost or simply ‘checkout’ of the system.
3. ***Move towards a more holistic and integrated approach by justice sectors service providers to addressing the core legal and basic needs issues of clients, an approach that does not compartmentalize problems faced by clients.*** We found in our research that regular consultations with both clients and frontline workers about their experiences, for the purpose of improving the referral process, was missing. We recommend a bottom-up approach to referrals of regular consultations with clients and frontline staff be taken to ensure a well functioning referral process is in place. The creation of a single entry-point into the justice sector, accompanied with a central updated database of all resources, to assist those who do not have access to a lawyer to navigate the system is also recommended.
4. ***More research be done to understand and evaluate the referral process.*** There needs to be a better understanding of what steps most likely lead to a satisfactory client experience in accessing legal services and resources in Calgary.

**Specific** - After reviewing our research and understanding the systemic issues, the project team proposes specific recommendations we hope the Justice Sector Constellation could consider immediately:

1. ***Increase public awareness and access*** - We suggest the development of an ongoing workshop series for the public to increase awareness of the legal system and services. The workshop series will allow free legal information to become readily available to the general public and for people facing poverty and other marginalized groups. For ease of public access, it would be helpful to change the language used on signs and directions (such as directing clients to certain buildings and offices in the Calgary Courts facilities). Any change to make navigating the legal building and accessing legal offices less intimidating and clear for the public would save time for these clients and convey a more welcoming environment.
2. ***Improve client intake and tackle issues holistically*** - There is a clear need to improve client intake and address issues holistically. It would be beneficial to develop a screening process with a universal form or a universal section on service providers' referral forms. This common form or common section on a referral form could be shared by justice sector providers to help identify the most effective next steps and provide common documentation across the sector. The common referral form or section would be aimed at making the most appropriate and fitting referral (either for a first or second referral, etc.).
3. ***Ongoing staff training*** - There needs be continued efforts to train service providers in the referral process, especially front line staff, in best practices and standards (e.g. such as how to advocate for clients being referred). It is clear that gaps in the referral process need to be better understood, especially the relationship between making appropriate referrals and correctly identifying legal issues of clients, and why some appropriate referrals lead to mismatched or only partially matched client needs. Organizations could present challenges and best/promising/right practices to each other, and have spaces for ongoing consultation. Incorporating training on common sector-wide values and qualities such as for e.g. compassion and empathy could allow frontline workers to also think beyond the mechanics of referrals. Another critical component of the training is cultural competence to engage with various populations, including marginalized groups such as refugees, immigrants, aboriginals, women, and youth.

4. ***Increase diversity of Constellation*** - To consider the needs of all populations, we recommend an increase in the diversity of members on the Constellation (if the Constellation has not considered this already), in order to have more marginalized voices present at the table of decision-making. Considering the various limiting factors that influence one's experience with the legal and justice sector is crucial, and can be overlooked if that experience is lacking.
5. ***Central updated and accessible database*** - In order for referring organizations to know what services are offered in the city, it would be beneficial to have a central database that is regularly updated by the Constellation, or another organization that could take management over the process. The telephone line 2-1-1 is a good start, but may be missing some services, and takes a while to navigate or for staff especially when meeting with a client. Many organizations have their own database of social, health and legal service providers, but the lack of consistency and other internal processes leaves it up to frontline staff to fill in any missing gaps or out-of-date information. We recommend that a central updated accessible database could be accessed online, from a phone app, or through referrals, in order to ensure that it does not exclude certain groups, resources or services.
6. ***Large number of self-referrals needs more attention*** - Due to the fact that 30% of referrals were self-referrals, we would also suggest that more attention be placed on online access and usage. The legal system is in need of further research to address the potential for the Internet to help with referral process. At the moment, in order to cut costs, many websites are not created by web designers. A possibility for avoiding high costs could be to hire recent graduates, who would have both the technical skills, and ability to help identify where clarity is required.
7. ***Alternative justice or community justice models*** - As the courts are continually becoming overrun and issues can take many months to resolve, alternatives to the legal system may be a pertinent solution to addressing people's conflicts. While many people do not understand or have good access to the legal system, it is often the first place people will go because there is not enough awareness of other options. We recommend

that more emphasis be directed towards other conflict resolution solutions such as mediation or alternative justice and community models that exist outside the legal system, which may make justice more accessible and perhaps easier to understand for low-income and marginalized individuals and the general public at large. We believe more awareness and research about these methods which avoid litigation may increase the ability for clients to access justice, because it is less expensive, easier to understand, less timely and less complicated.

8. *Research best practice referral steps and processes of justice sector service providers -*

More research is needed to better understand the relationship between correctly identifying legal issues of clients, appropriate referrals and matched client needs by justice sector providers to which clients are referred. We would also recommend that service providers consider undertaking a similar project to the one we did, having organizations go through and review their procedures and how they collaborate with each other. This would act as a continual evaluation and reviewing process to help agencies identify the areas which they need to work on, and places where gaps exist.

## **2. Background**

Legal services can be challenging to access, as the legal system is intimidating and unapproachable for the majority of the public. It is difficult to navigate and understand for many outside of the justice sector, and is especially burdensome for “low-income” clients. Low-income clients and marginalized individuals are among the most vulnerable populations in the community, especially women and children, who most commonly use legal services. Clients that are most often seen include: those attempting to escape domestic violence, youth, those living with mental illness, immigrants, and Aboriginals (Langer, 2006). This project focuses on marginalized and low-income clients from these categories, and how the system works or doesn't work for them.

Poverty is interconnected with many other issues, which can include those that intersect with the legal system. Legal Aid Alberta is an example of an organization working towards equality for access to legal services (Langer, 2006), and referrals are often given to clients to help them attempt to navigate the legal system and better understand their legal issues. This is

not the entire picture however, as is recognized by the Constellation, because clients who often use legal services require more than just legal support and need access to other health and social service resources.

The Constellation under the CPRI recognized that legal issues do not generally happen in isolation (Justice Sector Constellation, 2013). The Constellation (2013) recognized that it is not just vulnerable populations in our community that lack knowledge of resources, but also employees and intermediaries who are often unaware of the services available to clients. The Cross-Referrals Project was created after the Constellation recognized that in Calgary, people lack knowledge about their legal issues and do not know where to seek help, as they cannot identify the nature of their crisis (Justice Sector Constellation, 2013).

### **3. Overview and Objectives**

The Cross-Referrals Project (“project”) was a joint initiative done in conjunction with the Justice Sector Constellation (“Constellation”) of the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative (“CPRI”) and the University of Calgary. The Cross-Referrals project is one of many projects the Constellation had undertaken and was the focus of our research. The Constellation sought to implement recommendations for poverty reduction as it intersects with the legal system unique to the Calgary area. The following overview was adapted based on the Project Description supplied by the Constellation.

The need for our project emerged once the Constellation identified that people who did not have a healthy support system often have difficulty accessing services that they need, legal and otherwise. Clients may have been unaware of and unable to identify their legal issue(s), or did not know where to access services to address them.

This project focused on cross-referrals between justice sector service providers and other health and social service providers. The Center for Public Legal Education Alberta (“CPLEA”), a member of the Constellation, developed tools and workshops to train staff in the various sectors to make appropriate referrals, better understand client needs, and increase awareness of justice sector resources and services. This project supports the pilot training by identifying which referrals were effective and needed to be focused on in terms of health and social service, and justice sectors. The project team proposes a number of recommendations to improve appropriate and effective referrals in a timely manner. Our main project deliverables were to:

Analysis of survey results already gathered by the Constellation on referrals made by health and social service providers to justice sector service providers

Identify which appropriate referrals are being made successfully and unsuccessfully between health and social service providers and justice sector service providers using survey results

Interview service providers about their experiences making referrals to various justice sector services

Review forms used by various service providers to refer clients to services and resources

Make recommendations on how appropriate referrals can be made in a timely manner from health, social service, and justice sector providers to justice sector services

Conduct an environmental scan to understand and gather information on other neighbouring areas and solutions to making appropriate referrals between service sectors

Present project findings in class and at a Constellation Meeting in April 2016

The aim of the project was to conduct research to develop recommendations for the Constellations that could be implemented to enable more timely and appropriate referrals of low income clients to justice sector service providers.

One of the primary objectives of the project was to analyze the results of a survey conducted by the Constellation of service providers making cross-referrals to and within the justice system. The project team assessed the survey data and analyzed the results to identify patterns and gaps, and make recommendations to the Constellation with the intention that the results will assist the Constellation when making decisions. An important voice missing from our analysis of the referral system are the voices of clients who use the system. To better inform recommendations for appropriateness and timeliness of referrals the voices of client should be included. To supplement the information gathered from the analysis of the survey results, the project team also conducted semi-structured interviews with social and justice sector service providers to gain a better understanding of their experience referring clients and to understand how the justice sector and services providers engage with clients.

The Constellation received funding to develop a pilot training program to increase awareness of legal issues that clients can face and the appropriate services that are available

within the jurisdiction. The training was implemented in the fall of 2015 and was well received. As a result, the Constellation administered a survey to the stakeholders involved to understand what areas require the most training and which sectors are lacking effective cross-referrals.

The project findings will hopefully inform the Constellation where the challenges and knowledge gaps lie in making effective referrals. The proposed recommendations suggest to the Constellation how referral of clients to justice sector could be more timely and appropriate.

## **4. Methods**

### *a. Sample*

The project gathered data on referrals from two sources. One source were organizations who had participated in the survey administered by the Justice Sector Constellation, and the other involved staff from selected organizations who participated in semi-structured interviews. In the survey report by the Constellation, client referrals were analysed in terms of their appropriateness. Data on client referrals gathered in the survey were from the six (6) organizations listed below with 79 different responses. Justice and legal service providers surveyed with corresponding referrals they received:

1. Centre for Public Legal Education of Alberta (31 referrals)
2. Calgary Legal Guidance (20 referrals)
3. Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary (20 referrals)
4. Calgary John Howard Society (3 referrals)
5. Pro Bono Law Alberta (3 referrals)
6. Other (2 referrals)

\*Total = 79

While we did not choose the initial organizations in the survey conducted by the Justice Sector Constellation, the organizations for our interviews were shortlisted with the support of a member of the Constellation to reflect a representative sample that would contribute to our research. Thus, our sample involved only organizations that were in direct affiliation with the legal sector or the Justice Sector Constellation. The sample frame for our qualitative interviews involved nine (9) organizations in Calgary, which are listed in Appendix 13a.

*b. Data Collection and Materials*

Both primary and secondary data was collected and analyzed for the project. Data collected for the survey was done through access to the online survey results through Survey Monkey. Seven of the nine interviews we conducted were completed in person, and two were completed over email. During the interviews, qualitative data was collected via personal computers as well as recording devices in order to be able to reference information later on. Information for the literature review was collected through online sources and articles.

*c. Project Procedure*

The survey analysis was done using a quantitative approach to uncover patterns and gaps, and inform conclusions from the data provided. We were given access to the raw data, and this allowed us to make more specific conclusions about the survey responses, rather than only having access to the summarized results. We had a list of guiding questions provided by the Justice Sector Constellation, which allowed us to better analyze the results and focus in on what evidence we needed from the survey in order to support our research. This was completed in the two-week time frame we had set out for ourselves in the project plan, and created a basis for proceeding with the rest of the project. Quantitative statistical analysis of the survey results was done without of any statistical software due to limitations and gaps in the survey data, this is further explained in the report. Alongside the survey analysis, we also completed research in the form of a literature review, environmental scan and in person interviews with justice sector staff, which helped us to gain more background information on the issue of referrals in the legal context. It also provided us with important knowledge on other potential solutions to the gaps and problems we had uncovered in our survey analysis.

After completing the in-depth analysis of the survey and a literature review, we proceeded to contact organizations to conduct interviews that could help us to further understand the context of the issues we had identified, and to give us a more realistic understanding of the issues at hand. Interview dates were organized within a two-week time frame, to ensure that information would be collected in time to analyze and include in our project. Interviews were conducted in smaller sub-groups by project team members, in order to have a more intimate setting and to ensure that all of the interviews could be completed in time. Our group members met with key contacts of each organization at their work locations. Prior to attending any

interviews, we created an Interview Guide (Appendix B) to ensure we would not forget to ask important or critical questions during the discussion, and this proved to facilitate organized and efficient interview experiences. The quantitative interview data that was collected was then organized through the process of coding, allowing us to see what key concepts and ideas were prominent throughout the interview sample.

For the literature review scholarly articles and program reports were accessed online using word and phrase searches and various combinations such as ‘access to justice’, ‘low income + legal services’, ‘marginalized populations’, ‘Canadian legal system’, ‘referrals + legal system’, etc. using the Google search engine.

## **5. Literature Review**

### *Overview of the Issue*

In general, access to Justice refers to the ability for the public to engage and participate in the legal system, and attempting to mitigate the negative effects of systemic barriers that marginalized members of society are more likely to experience. According to Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre, since 1960 access to justice has often been defined as focusing on practicing law for low-income citizens. It is this definition that has formed the foundation for many of the legal aid and poverty law clinics that exist in Calgary and in Canada. There is a continual need in the current system to advocate for people who cannot afford lawyers, and to address the many inadequacies and limitations of the legal system (ACLRC, 2016). Tutty et. al (n.d.) also highlight the importance of addressing marginalized groups within the legal system, and understanding the gaps which lie in making appropriate referrals for these groups.

### *What are the Challenges to Referral Processes?*

As stated by The Law Society of British Columbia, the referral process is a vital link in the delivery of pro-bono legal services, which is a key part of helping individuals experiencing poverty access the justice system. One of the major challenges they identify is the large amount of clinics agencies being offered in Canadian provinces, and being able to identify what services are available for people as well as keeping track of changing policies and contact information (LSBC, 2007). Legal Server (2016) also mentioned that the major challenge in the realm of legal services involves client intake and referrals. The problem comes from people approaching

service providers who fall outside of the scope of their work, and thus the role of effective referrals becomes important in facilitating help for that client. It is clear that problems for people in conflict with the legal system do not exist in isolation, and must be addressed holistically in order to fully deal with the issues.

Limitations many of the legal and social service referral systems experience include needing online access, and the inaccessibility to information about available programs. As Macphail (2012) suggests, in order to find solutions, access to justice needs to be understood from the perspective of the people who experience legal problems. There must be an elimination of hierarchy between the legal system and the public, and situations must be more sympathetic to the everyday lives of citizens. This is especially the case for those who may come from diverse backgrounds and do not have a basic understanding of the Western justice system. As Wayland (2006) argues, one of the most prominent challenges that newcomers face is navigating legal jurisdiction, and these can make integration into Canadian society challenging and stressful. There are also many people who have various structural barriers that they must overcome, and these cannot be addressed in isolation. As Ngo (2009) argues, immigrant youth face a particular challenge in Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver in accessing legal services. Issues such as traumatic migration experience, poverty, limited English, social isolation, and discrimination makes immigrant youth vulnerable to legal issues. There needs to be an increased awareness of the issues the most marginalized groups in Canada face, and services which operate under a framework of rights and social justice.

As Macphail (2012) highlights, the cost of legal services prevents a lot of people from seeking the help they require, and as Tutty et. al (n.d.) argues, these costs appear to prevent marginalized groups from attaining justice. Jakhanwal (2014) also brings up the issue of an increase in urban development leading to the exclusion of the poor from accessing legal services. Inequality can be seen in terms of a lack of economic, social and educational opportunities, in addition to a lack of income. Problems of poverty are exacerbated when those who lack sufficient resources become involved in legal matters. This double burden then poses a challenge for individuals, and often legal issues are much harder to resolve and justice is much harder to achieve because of a lack of wealth.

### *What are Potential Solutions?*

As argued by Macphail (2012), even though technological innovations are changing our modern world, they appear to be bypassing the justice system in Canada. In order to improve the justice system, Macphail argues for the creation of a national justice Internet portal to simplify and coordinate access to justice information. This must be a system that is easy to use, include interactive tools to assist users in completing forms and answering questions, and be kept up to date with current information. In order to increase access to justice, it is clear that internet-based legal information and advice systems must be given a priority. There needs to be an initiative that has the potential to draw together a comprehensive web portal where people can easily receive the help and information they require. This would lead to a potential entry point into the complex legal system within Calgary.

Wayland (2006) suggests that in order to make a justice system which is more integrative of immigrants, there must be a reduction of barriers which exist between the government and public sector to make communication more valuable, reduce the number of people in legal 'limbo' by allowing them to gain permanent residence status upon gaining refugee status, and increasing interpreters and aids for those who may have language and cultural barriers. Ngo (2009) suggests that in order to address immigrant youth, there needs to be the creation of a comprehensive immigrant youth specific service, cultural competence, coordination and collaboration, community development, and more responsive policy development.

There are several initiatives and variations of referral systems that are being implemented across Canada, but "one size fits all" has yet to be identified. The Law Society of British Columbia recommended the need for a "province-wide database of pro bono legal and advocacy service providers that is comprehensive, current, and widely accessible" (LSBC, 2007). This would help to create more networking opportunities between organizations and an increase in communication between key service providers. They also discussed the need for organizations to be accessible, and easily translatable for those who may not understand legal jargon. Ensuring that barriers are removed from organizations enables the public to access justice more successfully, and navigate the legal system with increased ease.

A local example of a potentially effective model for addressing low-income clients in the legal system exists at the University of Calgary. Student Legal Assistance is an on-campus law

clinic run by U of C law students and volunteer lawyers who help students and other low-income Calgary residents in need get free representation and legal assistance. This is an initiative that provides clients with student caseworkers, who will provide comprehensive assistance with civil, criminal, and family law matters. The caseworker acts as an advocate, and can also appear in Court for the client, make pleas, attend Dispute Resolutions and Negotiation Proceedings, attend Early Case Resolutions, and run trials (Student Legal Assistance, 2016). This organization is an excellent example of the “caseworker model,” which allows clients to have one case manager who deals with all of the legal referrals and appointments that need to be made, and act not only as an entry point but also a continuing support throughout the entire process. This reduces the potential for people to be referred incorrectly, and also reduces the need for the exhausting process of client’s needing to repeat their situation to various service providers. Intake is only done once, reducing frustration and creating a more streamlined and effective

### *Conclusion*

While many people are quick to identify the issues involved with low-income clients in the legal system, there is still a need for more comprehensive and specific solutions to address the problems people are facing. This literature review helped provide insight for our project, as we gained knowledge of the dynamics regarding various issues existing within Canada and Calgary and were able to learn some of the key things that our recommendations should work towards in addressing comprehensive systemic issues.

## **6. Survey Analysis & Findings**

### *a. Processes of Analysis*

The Justice Sector Constellation conducted a survey with justice and legal service providers to determine the appropriateness of referrals made to the legal and justice service providers both from within the sector and from outside service providers such as health and social service providers. The project team was asked to analyze the results of the survey to help identify the sectors in which and the extent to which referrals from health care and other social service providers and intermediaries to justice sector service providers occur regularly, and those in which such referrals do not occur regularly.

To categorize the total 79 referrals by “Sectors” the project team was guided by the sectors indicated in question 3b of the survey results, which were:

- Legal and Justice Services
- Health Services
- Basic Needs Services
- Income Supports/ Finances Needs
- Immigrant Services
- \*Self-referrals and Intermediates

In addition, in order to determine referrals made by “Types of Services” the project team was guided by the breakdown indicated in question 3b of the survey results, which were:

- Government
- Non-profit
- Private
- Intermediates (Friends & Family)
- \* Self-referrals

In both cases referrals from *\*Self-referrals* and *Intermediates* (friends, family, colleagues, etc.) were included in the analysis because of large numbers of referrals from these source.

The list of questions below was provided by the Justice Constellation to guide the project team in its analysis of the survey results.

*b. Findings*

**Question 1:** Of those who self-referred, by online search or otherwise:

*1.1. To what extent did they identify a legal issue, correctly or otherwise?*

**Answer -** There were 24 self-referrals (30%) reported out of 79 total referrals received. Most of the responses (19) for legal issues identified, correctly or otherwise were incomplete (missing data). Only 1 self-referral was reported to both identify and correctly identify the legal issue. Four self-referrals were reported to both not identify and incorrectly identify the legal

issues. **There was insufficient information (missing data) to determine the extent to which self-referrals either identify a legal issue, correctly or otherwise.** See Chart 1.



Chart 1. Summaries reported self-referrals (mostly via online) that either identify a legal issue, correctly or otherwise, and were appropriate.

1.2. *To what extent did they appropriately refer themselves?*

**Answer -** Most of the responses (19), on the appropriateness of self-referrals were incomplete (missing data). Only 1 self-referral was reported as appropriate, four (4) were reported as inappropriate. **There was insufficient information (missing data) to determine the extent to which individuals appropriately self-referred themselves.** See Chart 1. It is *recommended, that more research and attention be placed on collecting data on individuals who self-refer since they make up 30% of referral clients in the survey.*

**Question 2:** Which referring organizations by name and type/sector:

2.1. *Did not identify legal issues;*

**Answer -** 5 organizations/sources in 2 sectors did not identify legal issues before referring clients, they are: *[Justice & Legal sector]* (1) Edmonton Police Services, (2) RCMP and *[Basic needs sector]* (3) Interfaith Food Bank. The others were Government organizations: Mountain View Country and Service Alberta. See Table 1.

2.2. *Did not correctly identify the client’s legal issue;*

**Answer -** 7 organizations/sources in 3 sectors did not correctly identify clients’ legal issue, they are: *[Justice & Legal sector]* (1) Edmonton Police Services, (2) RCMP, (3) Legal Aid; *[Basic needs sector]* (4) Interfaith Food Bank and; *[Income Support/ Financial Services]*

(5) Bank. The others were Government organizations: Mountain View County and Service Alberta. See Table 1.

2.3. Did not make an appropriate referral?

**Answer** - 6 organizations/sources in 2 sectors did not make appropriate referrals, they are: *[Justice & Legal sector]* (1) RCMP, (2) Calgary Court Center, (3) Legal Aid; *[Basic needs sector]* (4) Alex Community Care Centre, (5) Bissell Centre. The other was a Government organization: Service Alberta. See Table 1.

Table 1. The table below is a summary of organizations by type and sector that either DID NOT identify legal issues, identify legal issues correctly and/or make appropriate referrals.

Referral Source	Referral by type/Sector	Number of Referrals made	Legal Issue Identified	Legal Issue Correctly Identified	Appropriate Referral Made
Bank	Private/ Financial Services	1	Yes	No	Yes
Mountain View County	Government	1	No	No	Yes
Edmonton police service	Government/ Justice & Legal services)	1	No	No	Yes
Service Alberta	Government	3	<b>No = 1</b> Yes = 2	<b>No = 1</b> Yes = 2	<b>No = 1</b> Yes = 2
RCMP	Government/ Justice & Legal services	1	No	No	No
Courts (Calgary Courts, Court of	Government /Justice & Legal service	6	Yes = 6	Yes = 6	<b>No = 3</b> Yes = 4

<i>Justice, Calgary Court Center)</i>					
Legal Aid	Not-profit/ Justice & Legal services	8	Yes = 8	<b>No = 1</b> Yes = 7	<b>No = 1</b> Yes = 7
Alex Community Care Center	Not-profit/ Basic needs	1	Yes	Yes	No
Bissell Centre	Not-profit/ Basic needs	1	Yes	Yes	No
interfaith food bank	Not-profit/ Basic needs	1	No	No	Yes

2.4. In 3 out of 4 cases, the referring organization identified a legal issue, correctly identified the client’s legal issue, and made an appropriate referral. To what extent do these overlap? In other words, did the organizations that identified a legal issue or correctly identified the legal issue also make appropriate referrals?

**Answer** - In the majority of cases, 3 of 4 cases, appropriate referrals were made when organizations identified and/or correctly identified legal issues. However, this relationship was not always observed. The two types of scenarios highlight this point.

(A) In at least 6 cases **inappropriate referrals were made in spite of organizations identifying or correctly identifying a legal issue**, they are: *three Legal/Justice sector organizations* (Legal Aid, Calgary Courts & RCMP) and *two Basic needs organizations* (Alex Community Care Centre & Bissell Centre). The other was Service Alberta, a Government agency.

(B) Also in 4 cases, **appropriate referrals resulted even though legal issues were not identified or correctly identified**, they are: *One Income Support/ Financial sector organization* (the Bank), *one Legal/Justice sector organization* (Edmonton Police

Service) and *one Basic needs agency* (Interfaith food bank). The other was Mountain View County, a Government agency.

**In summary, from the survey results, there is no guarantee that appropriate referrals by organizations were dependent on identifying or correctly identifying legal issues,** see Table 2. Some organizations like Immigrant Services Calgary and Legal Aid were more consistent in identifying, correctly identifying legal issues and making appropriate referrals for multiple clients. It is *recommended that further research be done to better understand the relationship between appropriate referrals and correctly identifying legal issues of clients.*

Table 2 shows two examples where (1) Calgary Court Center made an *appropriate referral from an incorrectly identified legal issue*; and, (2) Edmonton Police Services *correctly identified a legal issue but didn't make an appropriate referral.*

Referral Source	Referral type/Sector	Number of Referrals made	Legal Issue Correctly Identified	Appropriate Referral Made	Comments
(1) Calgary Court Center	Government / Justice & Legal services	6	Yes = 6	No = 2	In one case client needed more time than the 30 mins free advice offered.
(2) Edmonton police service	Government / Justice & Legal services	1	No	Yes	_____

**Question 3:**

*3.1. Which referring organizations by name and type/sector made a referral that did not match the client's needs?*

**Answer** - The majority of organizations, 4 out of 5, made referrals that matched or *somewhat* matched clients' needs. However, 6 organisations/ sources in 3 sectors made referrals that did not match clients' needs, they are: *[Income supports/ Financial Services]* (1) the Bank; *[Justice & Legal services]* (2) RCMP, (3) Legal Aid; *[Basic needs services]* (4) Alex

Community Care Centre, (5) Bissell Centre. The other was Service Alberta, a Government agency. For *[Self-referrals]* 9 self-referrals did not match client needs. See Table 3.

It should also be noted that **not all appropriate referrals led to matched client needs**. For e.g. 5 organizations/ sources in 3 sectors made appropriate referrals that did not match or somewhat matched client needs, they are: *[Income supports/ Financial Services]* (1) Bank; *[Justice & Legal services]* (2) Calgary Courts, (3) Legal Aid, (4) Elizabeth Fry Society; *[Basic needs services]* (5) Interfaith Food Bank. See Table 3.

Though numbers were small, 6% of cases, it is *recommended that further research be done to better understand why in some cases appropriate referrals lead to unmatched or only partially matched client needs*.

Table 3 shows the list of organization by sector that made referrals that did not match clients' needs.

<b>Referral Source</b>	<b>Referral type/Sector</b>	<b>Number of Referrals made</b>	<b>Appropriate Referral Made</b>	<b>Matched Clients' needs</b>
Bank	Private/ Income & Financial Services	1	NA	No
Service Alberta	Government/ Justice & Legal services	3	<b>No = 1</b> Yes = 2	<b>No = 1</b> Yes = 2
RCMP	Government/ Justice & Legal services	1	No	No
Legal Aid	Not-profit/ Justice & Legal services	8	<b>No = 1</b> Yes = 7	<b>No = 2</b> Yes = 3 Somewhat = 3

Alex Community Care Center	Not-profit/ Basic needs	1	No	No
Bissell Centre	Not-profit/ Basic needs	1	No	No
Online	Self-Referral	24	<b>No = 4</b> Yes = 1 Missing Data = 19	<b>No = 9</b> Yes = 15

3.2. For the “no” answers, is there any pattern in the organizations to which clients were referred?

**Answer** - The project team found it difficult to determine if there was an established pattern in the organizations to which clients (with unmatched or partially met needs) were referred. From the survey results we found that **the majority of referrals (10 out of the total 16) were made to Centre for Public Legal Education of Alberta (mostly from self-referred clients)**, Calgary Legal Guidance received 2 referrals and Pro Bono Law Alberta received 3 (all from self-referred clients).

From the survey results most organizations recorded only one referral making it difficult to know how they would perform over multiple referrals. However, in our analysis of questions 2 and 3, we found that Service Alberta and RCMP were the only organizations that had the answer ‘No’ to all four referral steps. Meaning that clients’ legal issue was left unidentified and incorrectly identified, they also made inappropriate referrals and was unable to match client needs. Because of the large number of self-referrals, it is *recommended that more attention be paid to better assisting individuals who self-refer through online sources.*

3.3. Which comments align with “no” answers? Can the comments be used to detect a pattern in the “no” answers? E.g., a number of comments refer to tenancy matters and incarceration issues.

**Answer** - The comments were quite diverse and did not provide enough insight to help us detect specific patterns in the “no” answers to referrals that did not match client needs and this prevented us from inferring any consistent patterns. Comments on unmet client needs ranged

from the need for a language translator, an out of jurisdiction case, landlord/ tenant issues, client seeking second opinion and specific referrals ranging from legal clinics to criminal matters.

*3.4. Can the answers to this question be cross-referenced with the list of participants in the pilot training sessions, to help identify possible targets for future training?*

**Answer** - Unfortunately the project team was unable to access the pilot training list of participants during the timeframe of the project.

#### **Question 6:**

*6.1. For the “no” answers, is there any pattern in the organizations to which clients were referred?*

**Answer** - There were 16 referred cases from 7 organizations were referred clients did have their needs matched. **The Centre for Public Legal Education of Alberta received the majority (10 referral or 62%) of these referred clients.** Calgary Legal Guidance received 2 referrals where they could not meet the needs of the clients. And Pro Bono Law Alberta received 3 referrals. What was also interesting were the clear “second referrals” rates. The breakdown is as follows:

The Centre for Public Legal Education: of the 10 clients received, 5 second referrals were recorded to the Family Law Information Center (FLIC), Services Alberta, legal clinics RTDRS.

Calgary Legal Guidance: of the 2 clients received, 1 client was second referred to SLA.

Pro Bono Law Alberta: of the 3 clients received, it was unclear if any second referrals were made.

From the survey results 1 in 5 clients (20%) needs are not met by the legal system on the first referral. For over half of these clients (9 of 16) it is unclear if they received an appropriate second referral or simply get lost or “*checkout*” from the system entirely. It is *recommended that more research be done to determine the rate of appropriate second referrals to clients whose needs of first referrals are not met and the resulting consequences*. Another possible recommendation would be outlining a clear path or process for organizations to follow that lead to appropriate referrals and matched clients’ needs.

*6.2. Generally, how effective was the Survey in collecting the data sought by the Constellation? Are there changes that could be made to the Survey to make it more effective to that end?*

**Answer** - The survey was fairly effective, however we faced some challenges when analyzing the data such as inconsistency with the way the information was gathered and the large gaps of missing data. The following are some changes we recommend for consideration:

1. Making sections of the survey mandatory to complete before moving on to the next question to prevent gaps of missing data.
2. Use a Likert scale instead of 'yes' and 'no' responses.
3. Combine different methods for collecting data to complement online survey e.g. in person and focus groups.

*6.3. Based on the Survey results: are there specific matters that should be addressed in the training?*

**Answer** - Frontline providers should be trained on the importance in data collection and sharing data across and among justice sector agencies and referrals made outside of the justice sector. Also the relationship between correctly identifying legal issues for clients, making appropriate referrals leading to matched client needs should be explored and ways to improve this connection of steps be discussed.

*6.4. From which non-justice sectors are referrals to justice sector service providers lacking?*

**Answers** - From the survey results, non-justice sectors where referrals were lacking include: The Health services, Faith-based services, Aboriginal community, Disabled community/services, LBGTQ community and youth and senior services.

**Summary Key Findings:** Some 79 referrals were made to five (5) Justice Sector organizations surveyed by the Constellation. The Justice Sector Constellation provided us with survey results they conducted with justice sector organizations for the project team to identify the sectors in which and the extent to which referrals from health care and other social service providers and intermediaries to justice sector service providers occur regularly, and those in which such referrals do not occur regularly.

Based on our analysis, in order of the most referrals made to the Justice Sector organizations by *sector*, the top 3 were:

1. Justice/ Legal Services with 21 referrals (58%)
2. Immigrant Services with 6 referrals (17%)
3. Basic Needs Services with 3 referrals (8%)

The least referrals were from Health Services and Income Support/ Financial Services with 2 (5%) referrals each. Note - of the total 79 referrals received, that were unclassifiable by sector, 24 (30%) were self-referrals, 16 (20%) were unknown and 5 (6%) were from Intermediaries. See Table 4.

When categorized by *type* from which referrals were made to Justice Sector organizations in order to regularity, the top 3 were:

1. Self-referrals with 24 (30%)
2. Non-profits with 21 (26%)
3. Government with 18 (23%)

*Note: Though self-referrals is not a sector per-se it is included because of the high number of self-referred clients, more than in any other referral sector.*

The least regular referrals were made from Intermediates (5 referrals from family, friends and colleagues) and Private sources (1). Some 10% of referrals were from unknown sources - See Chart 2.

In the majority of cases, 3 of 4 cases, appropriate referrals were made when organizations identified and/or correctly identified legal issues. However, is a small percentage of referrals (12%) the relationship between the identification and/or correct identification of legal issues and appropriate referrals was not definite. Also, it was found that in at least 5 cases, 6% of referrals, appropriate referrals did not lead to matched clients' needs.

Also, of the 1 in 5 clients (20%) whose needs were not met by the legal system on their first referral, for over half of these clients (9 of 16) it is unclear if they receive an appropriate second referral or simply get lost or “*checkout*” from the system.



Chart 2 Identifies the sectors in which and the extent to which referrals made to justice sector service providers occur regularly and/or not regularly.

Table 4 below identifies Services in which and the extent to which referrals from Justice/ Legal Services, Healthcare and other Social Service providers to Justice Sector Service Providers occur regularly and/or not regularly.

Referrals made by Sector	Referrals made
Justice/Legal Services ( <i>Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Service (RTDRS), Calgary Police Service, Edmonton Police Services, RCMP, Court of Justice, Family Justice, Court of Justice, Calgary Court Center, Legal Aid, Elizabeth Fry Society</i> )	21 (58%)
Immigrant Services ( <i>Center for Newcomers, Calgary Catholic Immigrant Services, Immigrant Services Calgary</i> )	6 (17%)
Basic needs ( <i>Alex Community Health Centre, Bissell Centre, Interfaith Food Bank</i> )	3 (8%)
Basic needs	3 (8%)
Health ( <i>Alberta Mental Health Organization (Hospital), CUPS</i> )	2 (5%)
Income Support/ Financial Services ( <i>Bank, Alberta Works</i> )	2 (5%)

Self-referrals*	24
Unknowing /unclassified*	16
Intermediaries* ( <i>friends, family, etc.</i> )	5

\* Referrals received but not classified by “Sector”

*c. Critiques of Survey*

Surveys are useful in gathering information about the social world. Confusion is often an issue that can come up in survey research. Simple language that is easy to understand is important in a survey. The use of simple language is important within the context of our project as this survey was sent to various organizations around the city. Depending on the reading level and education of the service provider completing the online questionnaire, confusion can be an issue and questions can be skipped or incorrectly completed. Below is an example of a pair of examples in the survey the project team felt could be confusing if not read carefully:

*4a. Did the referring organization or person identify a legal issue of the client?*

*4b. Did the referring organization or person correctly identify the legal issue?*

Also

*3a. [Agency question] Please identify the type and sector of the referring organization or person*

*3b. If client was referred by an organization in question 3a, please identify the organization by sector*

While the project team realizes the challenge in developing a reliable questionnaire, we felt field testing the questionnaire with different agency staff could have refined the questionnaire better.

It appears from the survey responses that not all organizations were able to identify the sector versus the type their organizations fell under. From the responses this appeared to have been a challenging task as some of the choices of “sector” or “type” appeared to have been a guess and did not accurately reflect the sectors they were supposed to be in. The project team recommend that the Constellation predetermine what sector each organization is classified as.

This would create less confusion for the organization/ person completing the survey and easier for data analysis. Classifying some organizations by *sector* and *type* was challenging for the project team especially where there were missing information. Identifying patterns in referrals would have been more effective if they were predetermined for survey respondents.

Some of the categories in the survey were open questions that did not have multiple choice answers for the organizations to select. This was confusing and led to variety of answers that made quantitative analysis difficult. In the future, we recommend having partially open questions, so this way the comments are organized and all questions are answered for easier analysis of the data. Alternatively, the consistent use of closed ended questions (yes or no) or a Likert scale would also have been helpful in drawing general trends and patterns across responses.

During our analysis of the survey results, we found some limitations that made it challenging for us to draw as many patterns as we would have liked. As there were many missing or incomplete responses which limited our ability to apply statistical methods to drawing patterns from the results. The small sample size and homogeneousness of organizations that were surveyed limited the scope of our analysis to a small pocket of the population.

A few of the survey questions seemed to be very similar in what they were asking which complicated the analysis process. Having coherence between the questions is important. There appeared to be a linear path presumed for clients accessing satisfactory service presented in the questions, from the correct identification of legal issues to appropriate referrals and ultimately to matched client needs. However, it was found that there were cases appropriate referrals led to unmet clients' needs.

## **7. Interview Interviews & Findings**

### ***a. Organizations Interviewed***

Completing interviews of key service providers was a consequential piece of our project that allowed the project team to gain in-depth knowledge about referral processes among legal and justice sector services in Calgary. With the help of our liaison at the Constellation we shortlisted organizations that we believed would provide detailed information and a better comprehension of referral processes for clients accessing legal services in Calgary. Our main

objective for conducting interviews was to understand: how organizations are referring clients; if referral processes were effective; and, what contributing factors led to ineffective referrals and what needed to be changed or improved in order to make referrals in the system better. In order to receive answers to our questions, we strategically contacted organizations that we felt had experience dealing with legal referral processes in Calgary.

The project team organized interviews into three broad groups namely: Overarching poverty reduction initiatives, legal and pro-bono legal service providers, and social/needs-based service providers. Under the overarching poverty reduction initiatives, we chose the Justice Sector Constellation and Vibrant Communities Calgary. The reason we picked these organizations was to understand the intersection of poverty within the context of the legal system, and gain a better understanding the relationship between inefficient referral processes and the exacerbation of poverty in Calgary. Under the legal and pro-bono service providers, we interviewed Calgary Courts, Pro-Bono Law Alberta, Center for Public Legal Education and Calgary Legal Guidance since these organizations are directly involved or connected to the legal and justice sector.

Interviews with the above organizations played a key role as they helped the project team understand the reality of how referrals are conducted within the legal sector, and their perspective on what makes referral processes ineffective and inefficient. Furthermore, the organizations in the legal sector helped us attain answers to pressing questions we initially had about legal referral processes in Calgary. This was key to helping the project team form recommendations to realistically initiate effective change for the constellation.

Lastly, for the social/needs-based service providers, we interviewed Elizabeth Fry Society, Calgary John Howard Society and the Calgary Public Library in order to gain an understanding on challenges that social and other service provider's deal with people and how they are helping low income clients in poverty access the legal system and the referral process to the justice sector. These providers were key in providing the project team with information on how referrals are perceived by those outside of the justice sector, and helped us get a comprehensive understanding of the referral system as a whole and not in isolation.

### *1. Interview Analysis*

Interview data was collected qualitatively to help supplement the literature review and survey report that the Constellation provided the project team to analyze to gain a better

understanding on referrals. While an interview analysis was not mandatory in our project requirement, we found it necessary to set up interviews with various organizations working in the actual field address the challenges, the successes and the grey lines staff face in the field. We thought this would be helpful as members of the project team did not have experience working or dealing with the legal sector and the process of referrals. As a group, we chose to use the coding analysis method to simplify interview results and discover key points. Descriptive or open coding allows terms to be identified out of a text that work to summarize the meaning and topic of the text itself. Through this process, we looked for the most commonly used words and phrases in our interview transcripts. This is a technique to identify major themes called “word repetition,” and we have combined this with “*in vivo* coding,” which picks out specific terms used by interview respondents and associates and appropriate meaning and context to this term. It aims to not stray away from the original intent of the interviewees’ words, and adds meaning to the terms being used.

Through word repetition we were able to identify the following key terms as the most present in the interview transcripts we analyzed. These words have been drawn from the transcripts of eight different interviews, and multiple variations of the documents:

Education/Awareness (19x)

Training (16x)

Collaboration (7x)

Complex (7x)

Frontline (6x)

Entry-Point (5x)

Holistic (4x)

Safe (4x)

Linear (3x)

Attitudes (3x)

Through completing *in vivo* coding we have been able to attach common meaning and understanding to what each of these terms mean:

**Education /Awareness:** This was a critical concept that was referenced in regards to the lack of awareness of services available between clients and service providers, as well as between service providers themselves. Education was one of the key terms which addressed frontline staff training, ability for services provided to be recognized and known between organization staff, and the ability for the public to access this information.

**Training:** This word was used almost exclusively to reference the training of employees at legal and social service organizations, and its importance in ensuring the referral process is successful.

**Collaboration:** This term referenced the idea of connectivity between organizations and staff across the justice sector, and the ability for these service providers to effectively work with each other to enhance and improve upon the system.

**Complex:** This term was used to reference the nature of the justice sector, and to highlight the need for understanding client's issues in full in order to provide them with referrals that will attempt to tackle the whole [legal] issue.

**Frontline:** This term was used referencing the importance of frontline staff working for legal service providers and social service providers. The frontline staff were discussed in terms of initial intake, contributing to the culture and success of the organizations, and their abilities in the legal referral process.

**Entry-Point:** This term was used to suggest both the lack of an entry-point into the justice system in Calgary, as well as the need for a central place that can address all needs and referral people correctly as an initial starting point

**Holistic:** This word was used to reference the idea that no issues exist in isolation, that clients should be assisted with basic needs in addition to legal needs, and there is a need for a central place where people can have all of their needs managed and directed in one area.

**Safe:** This word was used several times in the interview transcripts to suggest the type of culture that legal and social service organizations need to provide clients with in order for services to be effective and influential.

**Linear:** This term was used throughout the interviews to make reference to the ideal way or clear path for the referral process to materialize, and in several contexts was addressed

as the juxtaposition to clients being bounced around a confusing web of ineffective and inappropriate referrals.

**Attitudes:** This word was used to reference the importance of attitudes amongst service provider workers, and the difference between attitudes that are eager to help others compared to those that focus on moving people through the system.

## **8. Summary Findings and Patterns**

There were seven main concluding patterns that we noticed from the literature review, the survey analysis, and the interview analysis in regards to the process of referrals for low-income Calgarians.

### **1. The social environment in which people receive services is important**

There is evidence that the social environment in which people receive assistance from service providers makes a difference in the outcome of their situation. As identified in the interview analysis, the word “safe” was most often used by the service providers. It was suggested that people would first seek help from a place/source where they feel unthreatened or welcomed, and thus people feeling “safe” was considered important. This conclusion also came from the use of the term “attitudes” which came up during interview analysis, suggesting that the way both frontline and support staff address clients plays a crucial role in their ability and confidence to navigate the legal system. If people feel that their issues are unimportant, or that they are being judged because of their situation, they may lose faith in the legal system and may give up in pursuing further help.

Referrals become ineffective if people feel like they are not being listened to by service providers, and are just being handed off to another organization. Frustration will increase when clients have to continually repeat their stories to different agencies, and will feel that they are being bounced around a complex system instead of receiving the help they need. From the survey results 1 in 5 clients (20%) needs are not met by the legal system on the first referral. For over half of these clients (9 of 16) it is unclear if they received an appropriate second referral, got lost or simply “*checkout*” from the system entirely. For example, if a client is inappropriately referred and does not have their needs met, it is unclear if that person will get a secondary referral or be appropriately assisted at all. We did not find a consistent protocol or policy to prevent clients (especially the most vulnerable) from getting lost or ‘checking out’ of the system.

## **2. Lack of public awareness and among service providers of legal services offered by the justice sector**

There is a major gap in the public awareness of services offered by the legal and justice sector. Some service providers are themselves unaware of the services and resources provided by other services in the legal and justice sector. “Awareness” was one of the key terms used in the interview analysis and literature review, suggesting more can be done to increase knowledge among staff of what services are being offered in justice sector in Calgary. There appears to be a gap in communication between justice sector service providers and to staff of non-justice sector agencies about what they do for clients. Better communication both among justice sector staff and across sectors (e.g. Health, Basic-needs, etc.) we feel can lead to referrals that are more appropriate and not based on assumptions about what services other organizations offer. The sector needs to invest in strengthening relationships among staff of different agencies for broader and wider collaboration. It is also evident that frontline staff, another term often repeated throughout interviews, needs training to know of services offered by other organizations, and to assist the public in accessing this information. It appears that it is important for frontline staff to have a comprehensive understanding on a wide variety of issues and services in order for people to be referred correctly and efficiently.

The project team discerned from the interviews that communication between organizations is often pushed to the side in the midst of day-to-day demands, and this makes it challenging for service providers to know what services are offered by others. There were some notable examples however where when staff communicated with the organization a client was being referred to, in addition to advocating for a client, referrals had a greater success rate for clients.

A central database that is regularly maintained is lacking whose use should be part of the training of staff making and receiving referrals. There is a lack of ongoing training for frontline staff specific to challenges and best practices of referring clients. It was found in some cases that employees are expected to learn from experience how to appropriately refer clients to organizations that will meet their needs. Referral processes to access legal services among different services vary and are inconsistent, in some cases even incompatible. The result is that clients trying to navigate the legal system become frustrated and despondent and may all together get lost in the system or ‘check out’ before getting their needs met.

In our analysis of the interviews, “education”, “training”, and “collaboration” were the top three used words. Everyone has an understanding of what is required, but education and training requires focused attention to translate this understanding into action. Relationships between service provider matter. There is need for more broad collaboration and strengthening of relationships among staff across the justice sector.

### **3. Addressing issues not in isolation nor localized**

Services are often not prepared to address the intersectionalities of legal issues and of people’s lives. For example, a legal matter often could have both a family and criminal aspect and span several jurisdictions (involving others in Calgary and Edmonton for e.g.). Beyond legal needs a person may have basic needs that need to be addressed first. A term that was used multiple times in the interview transcripts was “entry point”. A lack of an easy entry point into the justice sector for those who cannot afford a lawyer puts those who are marginalized or low-income at a disadvantage. Lawyers work as “case managers” who are able to see the big picture and integrate the dichotomized facets of the system in a way that is comprehensive to the client. In the absence of a lawyer, the various service providers can only provide one piece of the puzzle, and the client is left to fit the necessary pieces together. This is often stressful and ineffective for someone unfamiliar with the legal system, as many people, especially those experiencing poverty, lack an education of the legal system.

“Holistic” was used four times amongst interviews to describe the approach needed in order to ensure problems are effectively being dealt with. Throughout the literature review, this came up several times as it was argued that the issues people have are often very complicated and require addressing from a variety of sources. The legal system and services are often not prepared to address the intersectionalities or legal issues and that of people's lives. Legal issues for some people are not conveniently packaged by jurisdiction or within legal domains for the system to address. Meaning when legal issues fall across geographic or legal domains an individual's case may become incompatible for the service provider to satisfactorily address. If there were a more integrated and collaborative justice sector, across the city of Calgary or better yet the province of Alberta, the appropriate referral of clients could be improved.

Vulnerable populations, low-income individuals, are prone to legal problems, with more legal problems that higher income earners, coupled with the fact that their legal problems usually

multiply: one legal problem can often lead to other legal, social and health problems. This relates to the common usage of the word “collaboration” throughout the interviews. There was a common understanding of the need for a better integration of services, and for some legal issues to be addressed collectively by different justice sectors services working together so that people's problems are resolved holistically, and do not persist only after one aspect of their legal issues are resolved.

**4. There is a tension between having a “one-size fits all” model while still addressing the diverse needs of a wide range of clients.**

Having a standardized or universal protocol that is compatible with all agencies providing legal services to clients is difficult to construct. One of the challenges is that in a complex system, there is a need to move away from simplistic dichotomies such as deciding whether to create a universal protocol, or address needs individually to acknowledge their diversity. There is a tension created with a “one-size fits all” model, which does not allow much room for the wide range of clients with various needs. However, the lack of consistency and uniformity throughout the justice system makes the referral process confusing and inefficient. There needs to be a mediation of these two issues to facilitate a system that is both more specialized and integrated to cater to a diverse public. Both elements need to be woven together for a better referral system, that of compatible referral methods across services and more access to legal specialists so no client is turned away. “Complex” is a term that was used seven times in the interview transcripts, and “holistic” was used four times, suggesting that while the system is complex and often broken down into specializations, we cannot lose sight of the interconnectedness of the issues or the interconnectedness of people’s lives and legal matters.

There are multiple identities that an individual may identify with and certain groups may face interacting layers of discrimination which makes it challenging to assess the situation and successfully help someone in a legal system that addresses the population as a homogenous whole. As an example outlined in our literature review, someone who is both a youth and immigrant would experience more set-backs and challenges that someone who has higher education and has grown up in the Canadian system. There are clear constraints that act on people due to these variations, but very little attention on the ways that they interact with each

other. At the same time, the various approaches taken across the sectors create inconsistencies in the referral process, and make it frustrating.

#### **5. System is not adaptable to a growing diverse population, and is difficult to change from the service provider level**

The system is not adaptable to a diverse and growing population in Calgary. The complexity of the system poses a barrier for those that are a part of a more marginalized group, and their needs are often not addressed. This leads to the further exacerbation of legal issues for these more vulnerable clients. As discussed in our literature review, the legal system is less likely to be accommodating towards groups such as immigrants or newcomers, young offenders and women. This is especially apparent in the failure of the legal system to provide effective justice for Indigenous peoples within Canada. There is a high prevalence of poverty amongst Aboriginal communities due to historical, ideological, and social barriers within Canadian society, which has posed serious obstacles in allowing them to access the justice system in comparison with other Canadian citizens.

The financial, social, and structural barriers that they are burdened with have continually perpetuated and compounded their inequality within the legal system. Aboriginal people, according to the article “Barriers to Access to Justice” (2016), they compose a significant subsection of the prison population, while also remaining severely underrepresented in the Canadian justice system.

#### **6. Challenges in clients accessing information for self and online referrals**

Although self-referrals and online referrals are increasing, there is a huge lack of website revision that is needed in order for people to effectively be able to self-refer themselves. In the survey conducted by the Justice Constellation, self-referrals made up 30% of overall referrals, but there was little information and data collected from individuals who self-refer to legal services and resources. From the survey results, the Justice Sector knows the least about this groups of referrals in spite of the of the fact that it appears to be a quickly growing category of referrals. As we encountered in the literature review, websites might not be updated on new laws and policy changes. The internet in regards to the legal system often lacks the ability to keep up with the ever-changing nature of legal services and organizations. It is also very difficult to

navigate, and therefore attention may need to be focused on creating web portals that cater to the needs of those in low income situations. The word “education” was a term used in the interviews that brought our attention to the need for access to clear information that is concise.

## **7. Not enough is understood about the referrals steps that ultimately lead to matched client needs of legal and justice services**

From the analysis of the survey results conducted by the Constellation the project team felt that there needs to be more research to better understand the relationship between *correctly identifying legal issues of clients, appropriate referrals* and *matched client needs* by justice sector providers to which clients are referred. For example, from the survey analysis there is no 100% guarantee that appropriate referrals by organizations were dependent on identifying or correctly identifying legal issues nor did all appropriate referrals lead to matched client needs. Though it was found that in the majority of cases, 3 of 4 cases, appropriate referrals were made when organizations identified and/or correctly identified legal issues, in a small percentage of referrals (12%) the relationship between the identification and/or correct identification of legal issues and appropriate referrals was not definite. Also, it was found that in at least 5 cases, 6% of referrals, appropriate referrals did not lead to matched clients’ needs.

## **9. Recommendations**

### **Umbrella**

Based on our research, the project team proposed recommendations to enable more timely and appropriate referrals of low income clients to justice sector service providers. These are broken down into umbrella, and specific recommendations. From our findings, the following are the guiding broader issues that inform our specific recommendations.

1. ***Focus on increasing public awareness and access to services in the justice sector.*** Lack of access to information is one of the greatest challenges for low-income clients who are already facing poverty and varying structural barriers.
2. ***Improve client intake and ensure that time is taken for the needs of the client to be understood and met.*** Without carefully diagnosing the root issue by spending time asking the right questions, the client ends up frustrated and without needs met.

3. ***Move towards a more holistic and integrated approach by justice sectors service providers to addressing the core legal and basic needs issues of clients, an approach that does not compartmentalize problems faced by clients.*** A missing link that we found in our research is regular consultation with clients and frontline workers about their experiences, so another recommendation would be to ensure that a bottom-up approach to referrals is taken. The creation of a single entry-point into the justice sector, accompanied with a central updated database of all resources, to assist those who do not have access to a lawyer to navigate the system.
4. ***More research be done to understand and evaluate the referral process.*** There needs to be a better understanding of what steps most likely lead to a satisfactory client experience in accessing legal services and resources in Calgary.

### **Specific**

While there are many issues that exist at a systemic level, our group believes that in order to challenge the system the focus must start at the bottom and work its way up. To effectively instigate change, the project team created specific recommendations which mainly address long-term solutions for an improved referrals system. After reviewing our research and understanding the systemic issues, the project team proposes specific recommendations we hope the Justice Sector Constellation could consider immediately:

1. **Increase public awareness and access** - While increasing public awareness and access can be viewed as something that will take time and must eventually occur at an organizational level, we believe that there are ways this can be done at the level of the public in order to help them better understand how to address their legal issues and navigate the system more confidently. We suggest the development of an ongoing workshop series for the public to increase this awareness of the legal system. The workshop series will allow free legal information to become readily available to the general public and for people facing poverty. Research into the experience of service-providers led us to discover that clients are more likely to be open with their issues in places where they feel safe, therefore it would be important that the workshop be held in a welcoming and comfortable venue. For example, discussing one's legal challenges in the library or at a social service organization would be less intimidating than in the

Calgary Courts. For ease of public access, it would be helpful to change the language used on signs and directions (such as directing clients to certain buildings and offices in the Calgary Courts facilities). Any change to make navigating the legal building less intimidating and clear for the public would save time for these clients and convey a more welcoming environment. The research team itself found the legal jargon quite challenging, and could understand how this would create a social distance for the public.

2. **Improve client intake and tackle issues holistically** - There is a clear need to improve client intake and address issues holistically. It would be beneficial to develop a screening process with a universal form or a universal section on service providers' referral forms. This common form or section on a referral form could be shared by justice sector providers to help identify the most effective next steps and provide common documentation across the sector. The common referral form or section would be aimed at making the most appropriate referral. A client's issue may seem legal when in fact the deeply rooted problem would be better suited to being dealt with by a social service provider. In cases where clients are struggling to meet their basic needs, this should be given equal importance to their legal issue.
  - a. *Creating a common entry point [Case 1]* - An example of creating an entry point into the legal system, and addressing the relevant issues is Law Society Referral Service, that has a form that can be filled out online, and within a week the client is contacted and has 30 minutes of free legal consultation to determine options, and look for a lawyer to be connected with (Law Society of Upper Canada, n.d.). This service is offered 24 hours a day. This service could be expanded to include pro-bono lawyers, who could help identify next steps, and perhaps be publically advertised at places like the library for those who do not have access to Internet.
  - b. *[Case 2]* - The University of Calgary provides services to students who otherwise may not be able to access a lawyer through Student Legal Assistance. This example of law students assisting other students is similar to a caseworker in that there is representation offered for academic appeals, as well as certain matters in Provincial Court and administrative tribunals (University of Calgary, n.d.).

3. **Ongoing staff training** - To approach the issues in a more holistic way, we suggest that there be continued efforts in training service providers in the referral process, especially front line staff, and how to advocate for clients being referred. It is clear that there gaps in the referral process need to be better understood, especially the relationship between *making appropriate referrals* and *correctly identifying legal issues of clients*, and *why some appropriate referrals lead to mismatched or only partially matched client needs*. Organizations could present challenges and best practices to each other, and have spaces for ongoing consultation. Incorporating training on common sector wide values and qualities such as for example compassion and empathy that are reflected when assisting clients could allow frontline workers to also think beyond the mechanics of referrals. A client's experience with the system could be enhanced if such qualities are adopted and practiced by sector staff. Another critical component of the training is cultural competence to engage with various populations, including marginalized groups such as refugees, immigrants, aboriginals, women, and youth.
  
4. **Increase diversity of Constellation** - To consider the needs of all populations, we recommend an increase in the diversity of members on the Constellation (if the Constellation has not considered this already), in order to have more marginalized voices present at the table of decision-making. Considering the various limiting factors that influence one's experience with the justice sector is crucial, and can be overlooked if that experience is lacking.
  
5. **Central updated and accessible database** - In order for referring organizations to know what services are offered in the city, it would be beneficial to have a central database that is regularly updated by the Constellation, or another organization that could take management over the process. The telephone line 2-1-1 is a good start, but is missing many services, and takes a while to navigate. Each organization has their own database of social, health and legal service providers, and the lack of consistency leaves the knowledge up to the individual frontline worker to fill in the gaps. A central updated accessible database could be accessed online, from a phone app, or through referrals, in order to ensure that it does not exclude certain groups.

- a. *[Case 3]* - An example of a website with clear formatting that is outside the justice sector is Propellus (2013) that is a search engine for those who want to volunteer. The short descriptions of the volunteering organizations, and consistent headings allow for quicker navigation.
6. **Large number of self-referrals needs more attention** - Due to the fact that 30% of referrals were self-referrals, we would also suggest that more attention be placed on online access and usage. The legal system is in need of further research to address the potential for the internet to help with referral process. At the moment, in order to cut costs, many websites are not created by web designers. A possibility for avoiding high costs could be to hire recent graduates, who would have both the technical skills, and ability to help identify where clarity is required.
7. **Alternative justice or community justice models** - As the courts are continually becoming overrun and issues can take years to resolve, alternatives to the legal system may be a pertinent solution to addressing people's conflicts. While many people do not understand or have good access to the legal system, it is often the first place people will go because there is not enough awareness of other options. We recommend that more emphasis be directed towards other conflict resolution solutions or alternative justice models that exist outside the legal system, which may make justice more accessible and easier to understand for low-income and marginalized individuals and general public at large. There is little discussion about Alternative Dispute Resolution methods and the potential for mediation, negotiation, arbitration, etc. to play a role in addressing the legal issues of clients also experiencing poverty. We believe more awareness about these methods which avoid litigation may increase the ability for clients to access justice, because it is less expensive, easier to understand, less timely, and less complicated.
  - a. *[Case 4]* - A specific example of this in Calgary can be understood through the Indigenous community. Justice is created and understood by the cultural context and traditions of a society, and this is an issue for those who do not share the worldviews of the mainstream system. As is the case with Indigenous peoples, justice is nearly impossible to achieve in the mainstream system because of the

differing worldviews, languages, and traditions of both cultures. Indigenous peoples have been forced to adhere to a model of justice that is unfamiliar and not meaningful to them, and this has made the Canadian justice system ineffective in achieving true equality and fairness for all citizens. In order to address this, there have been systems put in place, allowing Indigenous peoples to pursue alternative methods of justice which attempt to accommodate their specific ideologies, histories, and social contexts. Putting into place alternative justice strategies such as this for low-income populations within Canada and Calgary could be an effective way to increase access to justice for a group that has needs and abilities that differ from the mainstream.

8. **Research best practice referral steps and processes of justice sector service providers** - More research is needed to better understand the relationship between *correctly identifying legal issues of clients, appropriate referrals and matched client needs* by justice sector providers to which clients are referred. We would also recommend that service providers consider undertaking a similar project to the one we did, having organizations go through and review their procedures and how they collaborate with each other. This would act as a continual evaluation and reviewing process to help agencies identify the areas which they need to work on, and places where gaps exist.

## 10. Project Conclusions

### *a. Project Difficulties/Limitations*

As with all projects, we encountered various limitations and difficulties throughout the process. A recurring challenge throughout the project was a lack of responsiveness from some organizations we contacted for interviews with staff.

A large portion of our project involved the participation from various organizations and service providers throughout the city. We encountered a few challenges in being able to effectively and efficiently contact these agencies in order to collect the data we needed, and this posed a potential problem for biasing our interview data. While we were still able to interview a number of health and social service providers, as well as other organizations outside of the legal

sector, the majority of our data was collected from agencies within or affiliated to the justice sector. This limited our ability to have as broad of a scope as we wanted, and potentially inhibited us from understanding the various levels and dimensions to referrals processes experienced by clients. In addition, because of immediate day-to-day demand for organizations, the project found it difficult setting up interviews (in the short 2-week timeframe) with agencies outside of the justice sector and non-affiliated with the Constellation. There is a lot of understanding about what is required, but very few people who are willing to put the time into carrying it out. While the goal was to interview as many service providers as possible, many organizations were too busy to meet or failed to reply to our initial contact.

Another challenge was accessing referral forms from organizations. In our project deliverables, we were asked to review forms from various agencies to assist in our analysis of understanding how referral processes work and how forms may play a role in this phenomenon. This would have helped us to gain insight on how to potentially improve and streamline the referral process. However, organizations were hesitant to provide us with their forms when we requested them both in person and over email. This was likely due to issues of privacy or inability to reveal such information. Some agencies may not have a formal referral process (and form) as the process appeared very informal for some service providers. This revealed to us that there is a gap in the consistency and applicability of referral forms and referral process amongst agencies in Calgary. With no forms to analyse the project was unable to conduct a review of referral forms used by legal service providers.

The project encountered some difficulty in making broad conclusions about the referral process without hearing from clients directly though this was outside the scope of the project. All of our data came from service providers. A focus on just engaging service providers was due to confidentiality issues etc., associated with engaging clients and therefore our scope became limited collecting research based primarily on the opinions of staff. While we feel that the staff we worked with were very open and honest about how they felt the system was working, and tried to speak from the perspective of the marginalized, the voice of actual clients needs to be considered to improve the referral process. While at the level of our project this is hard to avoid, it is important to consider that potential biases of the research we collected.

Lastly, the project found it challenging to remain inside of our project scope at all times as there are so many systemic issues to be addressed; there were times when recommendations

became too broad or too complex for realistic implementation. While we were always able to regain focus on specific ideas to help the problem at hand, we found it difficult to ignore the larger issues that continually perpetuate poverty and injustice. Learning to use this passion for social change to make smaller community level impact was something our group had to learn to do over the semester.

*b. Highlights*

Aside from the triumphs we had as a group in completing our project deliverables and objectives, there were several highlights and successes that occurred outside of the limitations of the assignment. All team members agreed that while classroom learning is effective in communicating theories and accumulating knowledge, experiential learning had a massive impact on our ability to understand development work in the real world. By being exposed to the realities that we had previously only learned about in textbooks and in lectures, we grasped a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the issues at hand. Being able to speak with frontline workers, behind the scenes staff, service providers from the non-profit sector, and people involved directly in the justice system allowed us to learn applicable knowledge for our degrees and helped us to interpret development theories in a way that was current and relevant to us. Understanding that our degrees had relevance not just internationally but at a local level was encouraging, and helped us to see the reality of development work around us, and the ability to make change in one's own community.

The support and guidance from Crystal Wierl, Director – South District of Community Corrections & Release Programs Branch, and the project's liaison with the Constellation was invaluable to the success of the project.

Another valuable learning experience and area of growth for us revolved around professionalism, and how to engage with those in the field in a manner that was appropriate and reflective of corporate culture. Some group members have never been apart of the workforce, and this was an introduction for how to engage professionally with individuals in an office setting. This allowed our group members to gain valuable skills in the norms and culture that exists outside of a university setting and persist in the labour force. A key part to this process was the conducting of interviews, in which we gained skills in leadership and effective

communication. Interviewing superiors, while intimidating, helped us gain confidence and assertiveness in our discussions. The ability to learn how to interact with those in a professional way outside of school was a valuable asset to our group as we move towards graduation.

Our group also had immense success as a team, and our collaboration and communication proved to be one of our most valuable assets. There was no conflict present amongst group members, and everyone contributed their own ideas and personal skills into the project. The success of our project is highly attributable to our success as a group, and our ability to act as a cohesive unit to effectively meet our goals and objectives.

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## 12. Appendices

### *a. Organizations Contacted*

List of organizations we were able to contact and conduct interviews with:

1. Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary
2. John Howard Society of Canada
3. Calgary Public Library
4. Calgary Courts
5. Pro-Bono Law Alberta
6. Calgary Legal Guidance
7. Center for Public Legal Education Alberta
8. Vibrant Communities Calgary
9. Chair of the Justice Sector Constellation

*b. Interview Guide*

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**TITLE OF PROJECT:**

Cross Connections

**SPONSOR:**

The Justice Sector Constellation

**NAME OF INVESTIGATORS (STUDENT TEAM), EMAIL & TELEPHONE:**

1. Witness Mbisa, [witmbisa@gmail.com](mailto:witmbisa@gmail.com), 403-607-3435
2. Abbas Macey, [abmancey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:abmancey@ucalgary.ca), 403-926-8624
3. Sydney Krill, [sydneykrill@shaw.ca](mailto:sydneykrill@shaw.ca), 403-922-8976
4. Leila Hedley, [leilahedley@gmail.com](mailto:leilahedley@gmail.com), 403-422-0782
5. Jena Hemraj, [jshemraj@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jshemraj@ucalgary.ca), 587-437-3509

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview (or for complete this questionnaire) to share: 1) your experiences on the referral process for clients accessing legal services; and, 2) how you feel the effectiveness and timeliness of referrals can be improved between sectors (for e.g. between health and social services to the justice sector). Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

**Name of organization:**

Sector:  Non-profit/Social services  Government  Health  Private  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions for Those in the Legal Sector:**

1. What is your role at this organization? Are you part of the Justice Sector Constellation or do you know about that initiative at all?
2. When a client comes to you guys, do you have a certain process or way of identifying the legal issues that clients may have? We understand that a lot of clients do not understand their legal issues, or if they even have legal issues, do you guys have ways of identifying this problem?

3. Do you guys make referrals for your clients? Are these often to other legal sectors or health and social service sectors as well? What steps does your staff take that lead you to make the most appropriate referrals?
4. What is your referral process? Do you follow a standard referral process?
5. Through our research we have found that the legal system is difficult to navigate. Do your staff receive formal training on the referring clients to legal aid services?
  
6. What sort of questions or information do you look for or inquire about when forwarding clients towards other agencies for help?
7. Do you ever receive referrals? Are they often correct? If you are unable to help a client with their legal issue, what is your protocol?
  
8. Is your organization and staff aware of the services that other agencies in Calgary provide? Is there any communication between you guys and other legal services or even health and social services?
9. Does your organization provide legal information or legal advice? Is your staff perhaps more hesitant to approach giving legal information because they do not want to cross a line?
10. For those individuals who may self-refer to your service, do they often find that their needs are being met at your organization? This question is an attempt to help us understand if your online system is easy to navigate, if people have an understanding of the type of work that you offer etc. Do you guys have any ways of trying to make it clear how you can help people, or is this something that can be improved upon potentially to increase appropriate referrals?
11. In relation to the question above, how would you rate your agency's website usefulness in helping clients who need legal services? Do you think your agency's website clearly outlines the services offered in a language that is accessible to everyone? We understand that legal jargon is a huge issue when trying to help those who may be stuck in the system of poverty or facing illiteracy
12. What is your organization doing differently that you're able to identify? Would you consider yourselves to be successful in both giving and receiving referrals, or is there still areas you can see that need improving?

**Questions for Those not in the Legal Sector:**

1. How much do you and your organization know about legal services and agencies in Calgary offering legal aid to low income clients?

*c. Interview Email Request*

Dear (Contact Name),

I am writing on behalf of the Justice Sector Constellation of the Calgary Poverty Initiative in partnership with the University of Calgary's, in regards to a current student project involving the effectiveness and timeliness of referrals between health and social services and the justice sector.

We are incredibly interested in meeting with you for a brief interview in order to understand how you currently refer or decide not to refer clients to agencies within the justice sector for legal advice, and how you feel we might be able to improve upon this process and where there may be certain gaps in the system. The interview can remain confidential, and the information may potentially be used to create a report that makes recommendations for how to establish linkages and facilitate better cross-referrals between health care and other social service providers and justice sectors, to find out where referrals are occurring or not occurring, and to understand what issues impede or prevent such referrals.

We understand that scheduling can be very limited, and we would likely take up between 45 to 60 minutes of your time to conduct our interview. However, if this is not a possibility for you, we would also be willing to email you a questionnaire to complete. If neither of these options are possible at this time, we understand.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email, and we appreciate the potential your organization has for helping us with this initiative in order to work towards poverty reduction.

Feel free to contact us about any questions you may have about the project, who we are, how the University of Calgary and Justice Sector Constellation have partnered, and about when you may want an interview to take place.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Sydney Krill, Jena Hemraj, Abbas Mancey, Witness Mbisa, and Leila Hedley (University of Calgary Students in Partnership with the Justice Sector Constellation)

**d. Consent Form**

<i>Initials of First and Last name (e.g. JD)</i>	

<i>Birth Month (e.g. 07)</i>	

<i>Last 3 digits of Postal Code (e.g. 7M7)</i>		

**Consent Form**

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**TITLE OF PROJECT:** Cross Connections

**SPONSOR:** The Justice Sector Constellation

**NAME OF INVESTIGATORS (STUDENT TEAM), EMAIL & TELEPHONE:**

1. Witness Mbisa, [witmbisa@gmail.com](mailto:witmbisa@gmail.com), (403) 607-3435
  2. Abbas Macey, [abmancey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:abmancey@ucalgary.ca), (403) 926-8624
  3. Sydney Krill, [sydneykrill@shaw.ca](mailto:sydneykrill@shaw.ca), (403) 922-8976
  4. Leila Hedley, [leila.hedley@facebook.com](mailto:leila.hedley@facebook.com), (403) 422-0782
  5. Jena Hemraj, [jshemraj@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jshemraj@ucalgary.ca), (587) 437-3509
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**This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.**

**BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to conduct interviews and research on behalf of the Justice Sector Constellation to find out if there are gaps in the referral process due to lack of or inappropriate cross-referrals between the justice sector, the health sector and other social service providers. This research will provide the Justice Sector Constellation with recommendations to improve timely and appropriate referrals to the justice sector to meet the legal needs of low income clients. The recommendations will also be presented at a Development Studies 591 course at the University of Calgary the first week of April and a final written report will be submitted to Dr. Caesar Apentiik, Instructor of the 591 course, on April 12th 2016.

## **WHAT WOULD I HAVE TO DO?**

If you agree to participate in this interview you will be asked a series of questions to better understand your experience referring clients to justice sector services for legal advice. The interview will take no longer than 60 minutes of your time. Representatives from about 8 to 10 organizations will be interviewed in total. These organizations were shortlisted with the help of Crystal Wierl, who is a member of the Justice Constellation and the Director of South District, Community Corrections and Release Programs Branch. The interview will be **audio-recorded** to help with transcription and ensuring all of the information you provide is captured accurately. If you are unavailable for a face-to-face interview please let us know if you are willing to complete a questionnaire we can email to you or participate in a phone interview. Participation in this interview process is completely voluntary.

## **WHAT TYPE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION WILL BE COLLECTED**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to share some of your work responsibilities and experience in relation to referring clients to the justice sector services and resources. Your name will not be used. Instead of your name a code—made up of your first and last initials, birth month and last three digits of your postal code—will be used to identify you and the information you provide. No information you provide will be able to be traced back to your name.

## **WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**

There is minimal risk to you taking part in this project. However if you feel uncomfortable at any stage, you are free to (a) refuse to participate in the interview; (b) refuse to answer any specific questions or move to another topic; (c) stop participation all together without any consequences.

## **WILL I BENEFIT IF I TAKE PART?**

You may benefit from taking part in this project. Discussing your experience and offering recommendations to improve timely and appropriate referrals of clients to justice sector services and resources may better inform your interactions with clients and cross-referral processes.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY & ANONOMITY**

We will keep any personal information you provide confidential and anonymous. All information from the interview along with audio-recordings will be kept in a locked cabinet at the University of Calgary. The Justice Constellation, Dr Caesar Apentiik and the student researchers will be the only ones with access to the information collected which will only be used for the purpose of this study. None of the information you provide will be traced back to your name. If you have any questions or concerns about confidentiality, please discuss this with the interview team.

### **VOLUNTARINESS AND WITHDRAWAL OF CONSENT**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent or stop your participation at any time during the project before 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the day before submission of the final report is due. You can choose to skip any question(s) in the interview. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your relations with the Justice Constellation. After the interview you are not required to participate further. If you would like a copy of the recommendations from this project, you can contact Crystal Wierl at the Justice Constellation. This project will conclude on 12th April 2016. If you would like to withdraw from the study or have any concerns, please let us know as soon as possible so we can respond to your request or concerns as soon as possible

### **WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING, OR DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR ANYTHING?**

There is no payment for participating in this project.

### **SIGNATURES**

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding your participation in the project and agree to be a participant. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. If you have further questions concerning matters related to this research, please contact:

Dr. Caesar Apentiik: (403) – 220 – 4857      or      Crystal Wierl: (403) – 297 – 3403

Participant's Name:

Signature and Date:

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Investigator/Researcher's Name:

Signature and Date:

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Witness' Name:

Signature and Date:

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